

## A universe of Czech design will soon be parked at Prague Castle. Designblok presents the premiere of the largest travelling project Designblok Cosmos and the main exhibition of the 25th edition

Designblok, the most important design festival in Central and Eastern Europe, has unveiled the look of the eagerly anticipated main exhibition of the 25th edition. Under the subtitle **Intergalactic Beauty of Czech Design**, a microcosm of ten top Czech designers and their unique original works, conceived as personal manifestos, will open to visitors in the Royal Garden of Prague Castle. The second project that will be on display on the grounds of the presidential residence also has an international dimension – the successful **Made by Fire** project, which debuted at the prestigious Milan Design Week in the spring, will be presented to Czech visitors for the first time in the Prague Castle Ball Games Hall. Both exhibitions will be on view from 3 to 15 October 2023.

For twenty-five years, Designblok has been dedicated to the development of the Czech design scene, collaborating with renowned designers, supporting young authors, connecting creators and industry, spreading awareness among the general public and representing Czech design abroad. All of this is reflected in the outdoor exhibition, **Space Capsule**: a mobile gallery hiding ten original glass works by ten leading Czech designers. The curatorial selection by **Jana Zielinski** and **Jiří Macek** will feature artists who are firmly associated with the festival – **Jakub Berdych Karpelis**, **studio DECHEM**, **Lucie Koldová**, **Václav Mlynář**, **Lukáš Novák**, **Jiří Pelcl**, **Rony Plesl**, **Tadeáš Podracký**, **Maxim Velčovský** and **Jan Plecháč**, who is also the author of the innovative architectural design. A semi-trailer truck has been customized for the exhibition, which, after parking in the desired location, unfolds into an exhibition area of 65 m<sup>2</sup>. The interior is covered with mirrors, while the exterior is wrapped in a silver reflective shell.

*“The travelling exhibition Designblok Cosmos will tour the world, carrying the banner of Czech glass abroad, and it was its nomadic nature that inspired me the most when conceiving the design of the exhibition. My aim was to create a proper show, a travelling circus that will introduce visitors to design in a slightly different light than they are used to while offering an audiovisually impressive experience. At the same time, all the technical requirements had to be met. After all, this is a mobile object that must allow for easy installation and deinstallation and function as a classic truck trailer during transport,”* explains the exhibition designer **Jan Plecháč**. The **Lunchmeat** festival of electronic music and new media collaborated on the creation of the audiovisual effects. The original sound design, which accompanies the entire exhibition, was created by composer **Aid Kid**.

The connecting link between the exhibited works is the material used: glass, so traditional for the Czech Republic, and the spectacular installation in the form of an **endless cosmic pilgrimage** for which the designed works were created. The exhibition is a celebration of 25 years of the Prague Designblok festival and the journey that Czech design and society have taken together over the past quarter of a century – and it is the JOURNEY that Designblok has set as the main theme of its anniversary year. The original objects artfully work with luminescence and represent not only the authors’ free approach to creation and material, but

also very varied production technologies, traditions, know-how of Czech factories and manufactories, craftsmanship and the latest approaches and experiments. Designblok Cosmos also plays with reflections and infinity. However, the question of whether the universe is finite or not remains unanswered, as well as the mystery of human inspiration. Designblok does, however, present the idea that the inner universe is a reflection of the outer one and vice versa.

*“Pythagoras believed that the cosmos is the opposite of chaos, darkness, a dark abyss where no shapes exist. We have curated Designblok Cosmos to carry the shapes of works created by the best of the Czech design scene in collaboration with top manufacturers and masters of the craft. We believe that Designblok Cosmos will become an attraction that will lead the general public in the Czech Republic and abroad to explore the universe of Czech design and at the same time invite each visitor to delve into their own inner world,”* says **Jana Zielinski**, Designblok Director.

The extraordinary Designblok Cosmos exhibition was created thanks to the key support of the **PPF Foundation**. *“We believe in Czech talent and also in courage, visions and dreams, the desire to create something remarkable and the ability to leave your mark on the world. I am delighted that the PPF Foundation is succeeding in doing what we set as our main goal four years ago when we established it – to help successful, ambitious Czech projects so that they can continue to develop, improve and stand out internationally. The mobile exhibition of Czech glass design Designblok Cosmos fits perfectly into these principles and values. Its theme and the choice of glass as the central material are based on the centuries-old tradition of Czech glassmaking, which is respected throughout the world. At the same time, it showcases the works of extraordinary personalities of contemporary Czech design, which is gaining increasing recognition abroad. We believe, however, that it has even greater potential and needs to be helped to gain more and more attention outside the Czech Republic. Supporting the Designblok Cosmos exhibition also fits in with the general partnership of the entire Designblok festival, which PPF Group has taken on since this year,”* explains **Jana Tomas Sedláčková**, member of the PPF Foundation’s Board of Directors.

Setting the exhibition in the grounds of Prague Castle, as the first stop of the tour, was made possible thanks to the **patronage of President Petr Pavel**, which he granted to the festival this year, and the partnership of the **Prague Castle Administration**. *“We are delighted that Czech design will be presented at Prague Castle with two exhibitions – Made by Fire and Designblok Cosmos. Our ambition is to showcase the best of culture and creative industries, so cooperation with Designblok was an obvious choice for us. It’s great that the Designblok Awards Gala will also take place here at Prague Castle. Czech design definitely deserves it,”* noted **Veronika Wolf**, Cultural and Programme Director of the Office of the President.

Designblok and the Designblok Cosmos exhibition are also supported by the **Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic**. *“Designblok is celebrating a quarter of a century of its existence, and this is the best opportunity to look back and to continue to grow. The representative exhibition of contemporary design Designblok Cosmos can be such an ambassador of new visions. The Cosmos exhibition offers visitors the world of Czech*

designers' skills and Czech producers' mastery. I believe in the successful mission of Cosmos not only here at home, but also abroad, where it will soon be heading. I wish the Designblok Cosmos exhibition a successful journey!" says **Martin Baxa, Czech Minister of Culture**.

The exhibition premiere at Designblok will kick off a world tour that will spread the good name of the creative talent of Czech creators and Czech design in general. **The first international stop of the project will be the prestigious Milan Design Week in 2024.** The Designblok Cosmos exhibition will be complemented by a comprehensive catalogue with original photographs by Václav Jirásek, which forms another layer of the project.

The **AGC glassworks** became a partner of the exhibition, supplying a set of mirrors based on Jan Plecháč's design. *„Inspired by the motif of infinity, the authors of the Designblok Cosmos exhibition came up with the idea to cover the interior with mirrors. And since this year we launched the premium Mirox 4Green+ glass, i.e. eco-friendly water-based lead-free mirrors, the cooperation with Designblok was the ideal opportunity to introduce them to the public. More than 170 panes were produced for the Cosmos exhibition at the glassworks in Kryry. We are a proud partner of Designblok and we are pleased that the magical experience of mirroring inside the gallery will be enhanced by AGC glass,”* says **Petra Takáčová**, Marketing Communications Manager for Central Europe, AGC Flat Glass Czech a.s., a member of the AGC Group, on behalf of the exhibition partner.

The main media partner of the Designblok Cosmos exhibition is the original Czech magazine **Dolce Vita**, dedicating its cover page and part of the October issue to the exhibition, which will be available for purchase at the iconic K-67 kiosk designed by Slovenian architect Saša Mächtig in front of the Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery Prague.

The project **Made by Fire**, created jointly by the Moravian Gallery in Brno and Designblok, which follows its successful launch at the world's largest design festival in Milan this spring, will be an equally exceptional counterpart of the Cosmos exhibition in the Prague Castle area. The exhibition will offer nearly 100 exhibits from 40 Czech artists in the field of glass, porcelain and ceramics in the context of current social issues. The selection of the curators, the publicists **Danica Kovářová** and **Eva Slunečková**, will also give an insight into the process of creation of individual objects. Progressive contemporary designers, masters of the field and young artists at the beginning of their careers are all represented. The architecture of the exhibition was given shape by designer **Maxim Velčovský** together with the studio **edit! architects** and will be on display in the Ball Games Hall of Prague Castle.

**The 25th Designblok will take place from 4 to 8 October 2023 in the Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery Prague, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the Ball Games Hall and the Royal Garden of Prague Castle as well as other locations around Prague. The Designblok Cosmos and Made by Fire exhibitions at Prague Castle will be open from 3 to 15 October 2023.**

**PRESS CENTER:** [https://bit.ly/Designblok2023\\_PRESS](https://bit.ly/Designblok2023_PRESS)

In the press centre you will find this year's visuals, formats for social networks, promo video, photos of locations, exhibitors and international guests.

**DESIGNBLOK COSMOS:** [https://bit.ly/DesignblokCosmos\\_PRESS](https://bit.ly/DesignblokCosmos_PRESS)

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If you are interested in an interview with the organizers, international guests and partners, please do not hesitate to contact me.